REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present invention teaches a way to form a magnetically pinned layer by allowing it to overlap an antiferromagnetic layer only at its edges, leaving most of the pinned layer with no contact to an antiferromagnetic layer, thereby removing the possibility of any shunting effects by the latter.

Reconsideration is requested of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamoto et al. (5,936,810) in view of Ito et al. (6,44,406).

Referring to Nakamoto's FIG. 2, Examiner states that layer 16 has a central section and a pair of outer sections having second top surfaces. He then argues that a part of layer 12 contacts only said second top surfaces. This statement is incorrect. Layer 12 does not contact any part of the top surface of layer 16. What it does contact are the sidewalls of layer 16. To somehow regard the surface contacted by layer 12 as being part of the top surface of layer 16 implies that part of layer 16's top surface is below its bottom surface (since the interface between layers 16 and 24 delineates the bottom surface of layer 16)!

Examiner relies on Ito et al. to show that Nakamoto's structure could have been formed through a deposition process. This has no bearing on the above argument.

Reconsideration is requested of the rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamoto et al. (5,936,810) in view of Ito et al. (6,44,406).

Claim 3 is dependent on claim 1. Applicant believes that the anticipated allowance of claim 1(in light of the above argument) will render claim 3 allowable.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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